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Bird Nest Tragedies

The number of early nests which come to grief by heavy spring storms is probably quite high. The following two observations related to me by a very thorough observer, Mr. H. G. Clarke, of San Leandro, California, tends to make me feel that many similar tragedies occur. These two instances were recorded during the rain storm on the week-end of April 6 and 7, 1935, which was followed by a day of severe wind.

An Anna Hummingbird nest was discovered on a limb of a eucalyptus tree on a much-used pathway, where hundreds of school children passed daily. However, Mrs. Hummer had managed to camouflage her tiny cup so expertly that its presence was known to few. Taking a great deal of interest in this tiny nest, and being especially observant during the extremely stormy week-end mentioned above, Mr. Clarke noticed the brooding female (the male Anna is banished from the nest area) attempting to protect the two eggs under her. The female was not seen at the nest the day following the rain, so with the aid of a mirror, Mr. Clarke discovered that the rim of the cup-shaped nest had caved in, completely covering the two eggs, thereby causing the female to desert the nest.

The second case was that of a Bush-tit nest. The long 8 or 9-inch woven pouch of mosses, plant fibers, lichens and feathers was found in a small monkey puzzle tree. Following the storm, the small entrance hole near the top was found tightly closed due to sagging of the water-soaked nest. So tightly was it closed, that it could not be pried open without tearing the nest apart. Two days later the finders decided to open it for an inspection of the eggs and nest interior, and much to their surprise they found not only seven eggs, but a dead bird over them. The brooding bird had apparently become imprisoned and consequently met its end. Another tragedy caused by spring storms.

Robert Taylor, Oakland, California. April 29, 1935.



Black Swifts

On Sunday, April 28, 1935, the writer made a trip below the Big Sur region in Monterey County to ascertain whether or not the Bald Eagles were nesting again in Torre Canyon where Mr. L. Ph. Bolander had reported them nesting during the season of 1933. See Condor, vol. XXXV, no. 6, p. 238. The old nest, very much dilapidated, is still in place, but after a two-hour wait about the locality no Eagles appeared.

On the return trip a stop was made at the Rainbow Bridge which is on the new San Simeon Highway ten miles below the Highlands. While we stood gazing over the water and along the cliffs, three Black Swifts appeared, which from their actions seemed to be two adults and a young bird. The supposedly young bird soared about in a small circle while the two adults took turns in performing a gesture such as a parent does when placing food in a young bird's mouth. While one swift was feeding the young bird, the other soared around in a small circle

until it was its turn to do the next feeding, then the second bird would soar around in a circle. Each feeding lasted about ten seconds. This performance continued for ten minutes, after which the three birds disappeared out over the ocean.

According to the few nesting records which I have been able to find for this species, the young bird should not be out of the nest until late July or early August, so I am wondering if the performance which I had just witnessed might have been some of the mating antics of the Black Swift. Were they two males courting a female?

If the two were parent birds feeding their single young, they must have had a large quantity of food stored in the oesophagus, since neither bird could have gathered such an amount of food in the distance traveled or during the short time which elapsed between leaving the young bird and returning to it. One fact is certain, they were Black Swifts.

Chas. A. Bryant, San Francisco, California, May 27, 1935.



Arizona Winter Birds

Three months on the desert in Arizona gave me an experience rich in bird life, for I saw the residents and some migrants, and before I left the summer visitants were arriving. Cactus Wrens were singing the entire time and Meadow-larks were a close second. Flocks of Lark Sparrows were seen in migration and Brewer Sparrows were very common as were also white-crowned Sparrows, which are common winter visitants in this locality. Although I saw Gila Woodpeckers and Gilded Flickers, woodpeckers were scarce and I learned the reason. They are shot by citrus growers as they damage the fruit.

We took many trips and on one saw six Road-runners, eight Treganza Blue Herons, and Phainopeplas so tame they did not move when we were within a dozen feet of them. Virdens were everywhere but a flock of Long-crested Jays, *Cyanocitta stelleri diademata*, was a record for the low-lands of Arizona.

On March 31, 1935, I was taken north of Phoenix by Mr. Harry Crockett, an ornithologist, who had seen a Vermillion Flycatcher the week before, and who hoped to show it to me. On the way we found nests of the House Finch and Palmer Thrasher in cholla less than two feet from the ground. At the ranch where he was supposed to be, we found the flycatcher a breath-taking sight. A Cardinal in the same tree actually looked dingy in comparison. In all, we saw three males and one female, and I found a nest in a mesquite about ten feet from the ground. To make the good measure overflowing there were six Arizona Hooded Orioles in the same locality.

Selma Werner, San Francisco, California. May 6, 1935.



American Osprey Near Benicia, California

On September 21, 1934, William Douglas of Walnut Creek stopped in at my home and left me an Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*, which he had picked up along the paved highway a little northeast of Benicia, California. The bird had a broken wing and also a fractured beak, as if it had been struck by an automobile. We considered this species an unusual record for this region, though the bird may have been picked up elsewhere and thrown from an automobile here. This latter hardly seems likely.

The bird was still alive, and vigorous enough to have to be handled with care to avoid its powerful talons, though it acted as if stunned during the time I had it. I fed it on fish obtained at our meat market and it lived until the 29th of September.

Emerson A. Stoner, Benicia, California. February 18, 1935.



June Field Trip was taken on Sunday, the 16th, to Ross, Marin County. The usual route was followed through Ross, past Phoenix Lake, up the Fish Gulch

Road to the picnic place near Lake Lagunitas, where luncheon was eaten. After luncheon the party continued on through Bon Tempe Meadow, down the Shaver Grade and along the old Fairfax Road to the picnic place below Phoenix Lake where supper was eaten.

Nineteen members and nine guests were present. The warm sunshine, tempered by a moderate west wind, made an ideal day, but in spite of this there was an appreciable decrease compared with former years, in the bird population of the region visited.

The Association's first trip in June to this region took place in 1926, the next in June, 1929. Since then a trip has been made each year in June with an average number of fifty-eight species per trip.

After leaving the train at Ross, the usual visit was made to the bridge near the station where an Anthony Green Heron was discovered, a species not recorded for this vicinity in June. As we continued toward Phoenix Lake, the sleepy song of a Black-throated Gray Warbler was heard in the oaks on the hillside below the lake. While we were climbing up the Fish Gulch Road, the song of a Monterey Hermit Thrush was heard.

After luncheon the first point of interest was the old wooden post which is located a short distance from the road leading out to Bon Tempe Meadow. In former years Western Bluebirds have raised a family here, but this year a pair of Ash-throated Flycatchers are in possession. There were three young birds and one egg in the nest hole. Along the Shaver Grade a pair of Western Tanagers was the chief attraction.

A Western Flycatcher's nest was found again on the down-spout of the Ross School. A Junco's nest containing three eggs was found on the bank along the Fish Gulch Road.

While waiting for the train at Ross on our return trip a Kingfisher dashed by giving his rattling call as if to bid us farewell.

Fifty-four species were noted as follows:

Anthony Green Heron	Coast Jay	Pileolated Warbler
Black-cr. Night Heron	Nicasio Jay	English Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Crow	Western Meadowlark
Cooper Hawk	Nicasio Chickadee	Brewer Blackbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Plain Titmouse	Western Tanager
Desert Sparrow Hawk	Coast Bush-tit	Black-headed Grosbeak
California Quail	California Creeper	Lazuli Bunting
Mourning Dove	Ruddy Wren-tit	Purple Finch
Anna Hummingbird	House Wren	Common House Finch
Belted Kingfisher	Western Robin	Northern Pine Siskin
California Woodpecker	Monterey Hermit Thrush	Green-backed Goldfinch
Cabanis Woodpecker	Russet-backed Thrush	San Francisco Towhee
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Western Bluebird	San Francisco Brown Towhee
Western Flycatcher	Hutton Vireo	Western Lark Sparrow
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Warbling Vireo	Point Pinos Junco
Violet-green Swallow	Lutescent Warbler	Chipping Sparrow
Rough-winged Swallow	Yellow Warbler	Marin Song Sparrow
Barn Swallow	Black-throated Gray Warbler	
Western Martin		

Members present: Messrs. and Mesdames Dunshee and Stephens; Mesdames Courtright and Ruby H. Thomas; Misses Berg, Cohen, Danz, Dunshee, Hunt, Papina, Paroni, Werner; Messrs. Bryant, Kirksey, Lippmann, Taylor, C. R. Thomas. Guests: Mr. and Mrs. Gilman; Dr. and Mrs. Wilson; Mesdames Anabel, Simmons, Wilke and two Scouts from Arthur Myer's troop.

Chas. A. Bryant, Leader and Historian.

Audubon Notes

July Meeting: The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the 11th, at 8 p. m., room 19, Ferry Building.

The speaker of the evening will be Miss Barbara D. Blanchard, whose subject will be "Observation of the White-crowned Sparrows on the Berkeley Campus."



July Field Trip will be taken Sunday, the 14th, to Land's End, Cliff House and Golden Gate Park. Take Municipal car "C" and ride to the end of the line, where party will form at 9:30. Bring luncheon. Leader, Chas. A. Bryant.



June Meeting: The 215th regular meeting was held on June 13, room 19, Ferry Building, with thirty members and guests present. President Junea W. Kelly presiding.

The following new members were elected: D. Kent Ghirardelli, of San Francisco and O. P. Silliman of Salinas, California.

The following observations were reported:

Paul Lehman: April 29, Berkeley campus, Townsend Warbler and White-throated Swift.

Fritz Lippmann: May 25, ocean beach at San Francisco, 100+ Red Phalaropes, 25+ Northern Phalaropes; 26th, Middle Lake, Golden Gate Park, two Spotted Sandpipers.

Commander Parmenter: May 13th, ocean near Cliff House, 100± Red Phalaropes; 15th, Leslie Salt ponds, 10 Avocets; 31st, Olema, Long-tailed Chat.

Robert Taylor: June 9th (late date), Oakland, Cedar Waxwing.

Miss Werner: May 19th, Golden Gate Park, Anthony Green Heron.

Mr. Eddie McClintock gave a most interesting account of his trip to the South Pacific, on the steamer *Noumea*. Without stopping at the Hawaiian Islands they sailed on to the Phoenix Islands seeing White-tailed Tropic Birds, Noddies, Bobbies and Frigate Birds. At Suva, Fiji Islands, he saw a Great Blue Heron and found a nest of the Satin Flycatcher, a small nervous bird, dark blue above with reddish underparts. For a shilling, he bought the long, red tail feathers of a Red-tailed Tropic Bird.

Traveling southward to the New Hebrides and on to Noumea of the New Caledonia Islands he saw Sea Eagles, Hawks and bright azure Kingfishers. For several days they passed thousands of terns fishing, the Sooty Tern predominating. Here, also, were seen White-throated Terns, Blue Gray Noddy and three kinds of Boobies.

At the mouth of the Brisbane River in Australia is a paradise for ornithologists. Near the dock is a game sanctuary with twice as many birds as at our Los Banos; Stilts, Ibises, Golden Plovers, Magpies and Wagtails.

On the Celebes Islands, a volcanic group on the Equator, he saw at close range Boobies, Frigate Birds and Red-backed Sea Eagles. The island of Cebu, in the Philippine group, was visited where Rails and Gallinules were seen.

On the homeward voyage Black-footed Albatrosses, Stormy Petrels, Glaucous-winged Gulls and all three Tropic Birds were seen. At Manzanillo, Mexico, Parrots, Warblers, Orioles, Kingbirds, Woodpeckers, Spotted Sandpipers and Ibises were abundant.

Mr. McClintock brought home quite a collection of souvenirs, which he displayed at the meeting.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

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For the Study and the Protection of Birds

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Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 P. M., Room 19, Ferry Building.
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